

**SUMMARY OF THE
QUALITY SYSTEMS COMMITTEE TELECONFERENCE
SEPTEMBER 8, 1998**

The Quality Systems Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on September 8, 1998, at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). The meeting was led by its chair, Mr. Joe Slayton of EPA Region III. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to review action items from the previous meeting, review comments received to date on Chapter 5, discuss issues on Section 5.9.4.2.1 regarding syringes, discuss issues regarding detection and calibration, and identify action items for the next meeting.*

REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS

Revisions were made to the discussion of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Environmental Monitoring Management Council (EMMC) EPA/EMMC - NELAC meeting in the minutes from the August 26, 1998 meeting. The revised section is provided below.

EPA/EMMC-NELAC Meeting

The discussion at this meeting included historical background and an explanation of the general concepts of Performance Based Measurement Systems (PBMS). The key outcomes of the meeting were following four action items:

- EMMC PBMS panel will compare the EPA program area implementation plans to the original goals set for PBMS,
- EMMC will track comments about PBMS, categorize the comments according to those requiring Agency-level versus program-level responses, and ensure that all the comments receive responses,
- compare the program area implementation plans for areas of uniformity and areas of unnecessary difference, and
- compare the PBMS plans to the Chapter 5 requirements for areas of conflict.

The goal of the EMMC is to have comments on NELAC Quality Systems standards by November.

An item to address is to identify the participants whose term on the committee is coming to an end. The committee needs clarification on the time limit for participation. A list of volunteers is available to replace participants whose terms are expiring.

COMMENTS ON CHAPTER 5

The QS Committee addressed comments from the following organizations:

Suburban Water Testing Laboratory: The concern was that small laboratories may be faced with relatively more work to meet the standards in Chapter 5 than would a large laboratory. The QS Committee has recognized a concern for small laboratories from the beginning but the basic philosophy is that small laboratories will be held to the same standards as large laboratories. The QS Committee will send a letter to the commentor stating its position.

Water Environment Federation (Robert Schweinfurth) received April 19, 1998: Regarding the introductory comments, the Committee feels that Chapter 5 is written with enough specificity to be auditable yet still allows laboratories sufficient flexibility. In addition, one of the goals of Chapter 5 is to unify and harmonize the quality control requirements for laboratories. Also, the committee noted that, in general, comments of a general nature may raise interesting points but are difficult or impossible to address. Comments that are specific to sections of Chapter 5 are more useful for revising and improving the document.

Section 5.4.2.b: This item deals with undue pressures that might affect “personnel” and not “personal” issues.

Section 5.4.2.e: The intent of this item is that the supervisor have a basic understanding of laboratory operations such as calibration..

Section 5.4.2.e: Regarding the definition of adequate supervision; the language “The ratio of supervisory to non-supervisory personnel shall be such as to ensure adequate supervision.” was taken directly from ISO Guide 25. This language will not be included in ISO Standard 17025. The following clarifying language, from the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA) description of this topic, was appended to the above statement: “to assure close adherence to laboratory procedures and accepted techniques.”

Section 5.9.4.2.1 Regarding Syringes

The question is whether microliter syringes fall under the calibration and monthly checks requirements for volumetric dispensing devices. Language was added to clarify the requirements for these devices.

Section 5.9.4.2.1.d was modified to read as follows:

Mechanical volumetric dispensing devices (except Class A glassware) shall be checked for accuracy on a monthly use basis. Glass microliter syringes are to be considered in the same manner as Class A glassware, but must come with a certificate attesting to established accuracy or the accuracy must be initially demonstrated and documented by the laboratory.

Section 5.9.4.3 Instrument Calibrations

The committee reviewed draft language for Section 5.9.4.3 (Draft Revision 3, September 4, 1998). Changes were made to the wording in items a, b, c, and d of the essential elements of calibration.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Quality Systems Committee is scheduled for September 22, 1998 from 1 to 3 p.m. EDT. The telephone number is 202-260-1015, access code 8958#.

Additional meetings are scheduled as follows:

- October 7, 1998 is rescheduled for October 6, 1998 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. EDT.
- October 19, 1998 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. EDT.
- November 2, 1998 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST).

A meeting of the committee is scheduled for November 9-10, 1998 in Annapolis, MD. The meeting is open to the public and will be held at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) facility.

ACTION ITEMS
QUALITY SYSTEMS COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 8, 1998

Item No.	Action Item	Date to be Completed
1.	Next QS Committee teleconference.	September 22nd, 1:00 p.m. EST.
2.	Distribute language amending Section 5.9.4.2.1.d to Committee participants.	
3.	Identify QS Committee participants whose terms are ending.	

PARTICIPANTS
QUALITY SYSTEMS COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 8, 1998

Name	Affiliation	Phone Numbers
Mr. Joe Slayton (2000)*	USEPA, Region III, OASQA	T: 410-573-2653 F: 410-573-2698 E: slayton.joe@epamail.epa.gov
Ms. Mary K. Bruch (2000)*	Mary Bruch Micro Reg. Inc.	T: 703- 589-1514 F: 703- 779-0267 E:
Mr. Raymond J. Frederici (2001)	RECRA Labnet - Chicago	T: 708-534-5200 F: 708-534-5211 E: frederir@recra.com
Mr. Clifford R. Glowacki (2002)	Ashland Chemical Company	T: 614-790-3482 F: 614-790-4294 E: cglowacki@ashland.com
Ms. Sylvia S. Labie	Florida Department of Environmental Protection	T: 904-488-2796 F: 904-922-4614 E: labie_s@dep.state.fl.us
Mr. David Mendenhall (2003)	Utah Department of Health	T: 801-584-8470 F: 801-584-8501 E: dmendenh@doh.state.ut.us
Ms. Sheila Meyers (2000)*	Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission	T: 512-239-0425 F: 512-239-6307 E: smeyers@tnrcc.state.tx.us
Mr. Jeff Nielson (2003)	City of Tallahassee Water Quality Division	T: 850-891-1232 F: 850-891-1062 E: nielsenj@mail.ci.tlh.fl.us
Mr. Donovan R. Porterfield (2000)*	Los Alamos National Laboratory	T: 505-667-4710 F: 505-665-5982 E: dporterfield@lanl.gov
Mr. Scott D. Siders (2001)	Illinois Environmental Protection Agency	T: 217-785-5163 F: 217-524-0944 E: epa6113@epa.state.il.us
Dr. Fred Siegelman (Absent) (2002)	U.S. EPA	T: 202-564-5173 F: 202-564-2441 E: siegelman.frederic@epamail.epa.gov
Mr. Mike Cross (Contractor Support)	Research Triangle Institute	T: 202-728-2045 F: 202-728-2095 E: myc@rti.org

Dates in parenthesis indicate year the participants term on the committee expires.

*Two of these members will leave in 1999.